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Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 191384

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SHUM, PINS, MI, US

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND AID TO MALAWI

REF: A) LILONGWE 1231, B) LILONGWE 919, C) LILONGWE 430,
D) LILONGWE 876, E) LILONGWE 1280

1. HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN MALAWI,AS REPORTED BY EMBASSY IN REFTELS AND FURTHER ELABORATED ON IN LETTER JUST RECEIVED FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (COPY BEING POUCHED), HAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE LAST YEAR. WE MAY NEVER KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT OUR EFFORTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TREND, BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT:

A. THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL DETAINEES HAS BEEN REDUCED TO
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AROUND 300, ONLY ONE-SIXTH OF THE ESTIMATED TOTAL A YEAR AGO. IN THE PROCESS, MANY OF THOSE JAILED ON PATENTLY BASELESS OR TRUMPED UP CHARGES HAVE BEEN RELEASED.

B. MOST IF NOT ALL OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WHO WERE IMPRISONED IN LATE 1975 AND EARLY 1976 HAVE NOW COMPLETED THEIR JAIL TERMS AND BEEN RELEASED. THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS

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TO BE MAKING A GENUINE EFFORT TO SMOOTH THEIR REINTEGRATION INTO MALAWIAN SOCIETY.

C. WITH RELEASE OF USIS LIBRARIAN FUNSANI, USG HAS NO MORE INDIVIDUAL CASES PENDING WITH THE GOM.

2. DEPARTMENT IS WELL AWARE THAT THE STRUCTURE OF REPRESSION REMAINS IN PLACE, AND THAT PRESIDENT BANDA HAS BY NO MEANS FORSWORN ITS USE. RIGID CENSORSHIP, SUMMARY CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY, SUMMARY DEPORTATION OF ALIENS CONTINUE, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO MOVE TO DISMANTLE (OR EVEN TO CURB) THE EXTENSIVE SECRET POLICE SYSTEM. MOREOVER, AS ONE EMBASSY SOURCE WARNED (REF B) THIS MAY BE NOTHING BUT A LULL BEFORE A NEW ROUND OF JAILINGS AND REPRESSION.

3. NEVERTHELESS, DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE NOW TO IMPLEMENT AMBASSADOR'S PROPOSAL IN HIS 1977 PARM SUBMISSION AND TAKE CERTAIN RESTRAINED BUT CONCRETE STEPS TO DEMONSTRATE OUR RECOGNITION OF THE RECENT POSITIVE TREND, IN THE HOPE THAT IN THIS WAY WE MAY BE ABLE TO ENCOURAGE ITS CONTINUATION, OR AT LEAST TO INHIBIT A RETURN TO THE PAST LEVEL OF EXCESS. DEPARTMENT DOES NOT CONCEIVE OF EMBASSY EXPLICITLY TYING EACH POSITIVE STEP TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS, WHICH WE BELIEVE WOULD ONLY RISK COUNTERPRODUCTIVELY RAISING BANDA'S CONFIDENTIAL

TEMPERATURE. RATHER EMBASSY COULD ACCURATELY DESCRIBE THESE STEPS AS THINGS WHICH WE WOULD LOGICALLY HAVE DONE BEFORE, BUT WHICH FOR WELL-KNOWN REASONS, INCLUDING USG POLICY AND PROVISIONS OF U.S. LAW RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS, WE HAD FELT UNABLE TO PURSUE UNTIL RECENTLY. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THIS FORMULATION IS ESSENTIAL TO A NEW POSTURE THAT RECOGNIZES POSITIVE CHANGE WITHOUT EXTENDING A BROADER SANCTION TO THE BANDA REGIME.

4. SPECIFICALLY, DEPARTMENT PROPOSES TO:

A. RECOMMEND TO AID A FAVORABLE DECISION ON USE OF SURPLUS L-M-Z ROAD FUNDS FOR DESIGN OF PROPOSED FEEDER ROADS. THIS DECISION HAS BEEN PENDING IN AFR FOR SOME TIME, BUT WE ARE NOW HOPEFUL OF A FAVORABLE OUTCOME SHORTLY.

B. RECOMMEND TO AID THAT CONTACT BE INITIATED WITH GOM TO BEGIN IDENTIFYING DA PROJECTS FOR FY 79 OR LATER FUNDING, ALONG THE LINES DESCRIBED IN REF D, ESPECIALLY PARA. 8. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE THE POINT DELICATELY BUT UNMISTAKEABLY, THAT WE HAVE RESUMED MOVING FORWARD ON

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THE AID FRONT AS A RESULT OF RECENT PROGRESS IN HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT THAT FINAL COMMITMENT AND FUNDING WILL DEPEND, NOT ONLY ON TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS, BUT ALSO ON CONTINUATION OF THIS FAVORABLE TREND.

5. REF E. WAS RECEIVED AS ABOVE COMPLETING EXTENSIVE STATE/AID CLEARANCE PROCESS. APPEARS DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY ARE THINKTNG ALONG SAME LINES. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS ASAP. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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